AL - HIDAYAAH No: 10

By: Sheikhul Hadith Hadhrat Moulana Fazulur Rahmaan Aazami, 1421/2000

The correct distance that will qualify a person to be a Musaafir is 88.864km (48 Shari' miles, approximately 54 english miles)

According to the Akaabir (senior scholars) of Deoband, the "Masaafate Qasr" (the minimum distance that will qualify a person to be a Musaafir i.e. a traveller in the light of the Shari'ah) is approximately 90 kilometers. This very same distance of approximately 90km corresponds with the views of the Shaafi'ee, Maliki and Hambali scholars.

This is the Fatwa (verdict) of the Akaabir of Deoband, who include the seniors like Hadhrat Moulana Rasheed Ahmed Gangohi (A.R), Hadhrat Moulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri (A.R) and Hadhrat Allamah Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani (A.R). Hadhrat Shah Waliyullah Muhaddith Dehlawi (A.R) who have also stated accordingly. Furthermore, the very same distance is mentioned in the Hadith of Rasulullaah (salallaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam). The Fatawa (verdicts) of Hadhrat Abdullaah Bin Abbas (R.A) and Hadhrat Abdullaah Bin Umar (R.A), recorded in Sahih Bukhari and Muatta Imaam Maalik also conform to the above mentioned distance.

The Fatwa of Hadhrat Gangohi (A.R)

Hadhrat Moulana Rasheed Ahmed Gangohi (A.R), who was regarded as the pride of the scholars of Deoband was once asked to explain in the light of the authentic narrations, the distance after which a traveller will be allowed to make Qasr (i.e. reduce the number of raka'ahs in the Fardh Salaat). Hadhrat Moulana replied: "Four 'bareed'[1], which consists of three manzils of sixteen miles each. This is substantiated from a Hadith from the Mu'atta of Imaam Maalik..." (Fataawa Rasheediyya Pg. 423)

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[1] 1 bareed =12 Shari miles, thus 4 bareed = 48 Shari miles.

Sheikhul Hadith Hadhrat Moulana Zakariyya (A.R) writes in Aujazul Masaalik (commentary of the Mu'atta of Imaam Maalik): "My father has quoted from Hadhrat Gangohi (A.R) that the Hanafi view of 4 'Bareed' has been deduced from a Hadith narrated in the Mu'atta of Imaam Maalik. There is therefore no difference of opinion between the leading Imaams in this matter." (Aujazul Masaalik Vol.3 Pg.101)

This is also recorded in Hadhrat Gangohi (A.R)'s discourses on Tirmidhi, which have been published as a book titled "Al Kaukabud Durri" (Vol. 1 Pg. 439). These discourses were compiled by Hadhrat Moulana Yahya (A.R), the father of Hadhrat Sheikh Zakariyya (A.R).

The verdict of Allamah Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani (A.R)

Allamah Shabbir Ahmed Uthmaani (A.R), who was the Sheikhul Hadith of Darul Uloom Deoband and Jaamia Islaamia Dabhel, affirms in his commentary of Sahih Muslim (titled Fat'hul Mulhim): "The distance of four 'bareed' is preferred by our Mashaa'ikh (seniors). The Fatwa of Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed Gangohi (A.R) concurs with this." (Fathul Mulhim Vol.2 Pg.252)

The Fatwa (verdict) of Shah Walliyullah Muhaddith Dehlawi (A.R)

Allamah Shabbir Ahmed Uthmaani (A.R) has quoted this very distance from Hadhrat Shah Walliyullah Muhaddith Dehlawi (A.R). Hadhrat Shah Walliyullah Muhaddith Dehlawi (A.R) writes, "The distance of four 'Bareed' is undisputable. Distances of less than four 'Bareed' are uncertain." (Fathul Mulhim Vol.2 Pg.252)

The Fatwa (verdict) of Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri(A.R)

The Sheikhul Hadith of Darul Uloom Deoband and Jaamia Islaamia Dabhel, Hadhrat Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri (A.R) once made the following comment while teaching a lesson of Bukhari: "The distance which qualifies a person to be a Musaafir (Masaafate Qasr) is a journey of three days and three nights. When this distance was calculated and converted to 'Manaazil' a difference of opinion arose. According to one view, the "Masaafate Qasr" is sixteen 'farsakh', each farsakh being equivalent to three miles. This will add up to fourty eight miles, a distance corresponding to what the Ahadeeth state. This is the verdict (Fatwa) that I pass because it also conforms to the other schools of jurisprudence. (Faydhul Baari, an annotation of Sahih Bukhari Vol.2 Pg.397).

Allaama Anwar Shah Kashmiri (A.R) also made a similar comment while teaching Tirmidhi. He stated: "There are many veiws amongst the Hanafi jurists with regard to the Masaafate Qasr. Al Bahrur Ra'iq mentions opinion that range from sixteen farsakh to twenty two farsakh. I prefer the view of fourty eight miles because it corresponds to the views of Imaam Ahmed (A.R) and Imaam Shaafi'ee (A.R)." (Arfushazi Pg.121). Many Ulema must have heard Hadhrat Allamah Kashmiri (A.R) voicing this opinion at the Hadith clasrooms of Darul Uloom Deoband and Jaamia Islaamia Dabhel.

NOTE: One 'farsakh' is equivalent to three Shari miles. Hence the distance that will qualify a person to be Musaafir (traveller) according to the Shariat is fourty eight Shari miles. The views of Imaam Shafi'ee (A.R) and Imaam Maalik (A.R) in this regard are 48 Shari miles and not 48 English miles. A Shari mile is approximately 240 yards longer than than an English mile. (Fatawa Darul Uloom Vol.4 Pg.495)

Mufti Muhammed Shafi Deobandi (A.R)

Hadhrat Mufti Muhammed Shafi (A.R), who was the Mufti of Darul Uloom Deoband and later the Grand Mufti of Pakistan, writes in his book "Auzaan-e-Shariat": "The distance of 48 miles has been deduced from a hadith recorded in Daar Qutni. The hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas (R.A) states that Rasulullaah (salallaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said: "O people of Makkah! Do not reduce salaah (i.e. perform Qasr) when travelling a distance less than four 'bareed', like from Makkah to Asfaan." (Umdatul Qari Vol. 3 Pg. 53)

Although there is a weak narrator in the sanad (chain of narrators) of this hadith [as stated by Allaamah Ayni (A.R)], the core premise for this deduction is the distance of three days. This Hadith is merely used to lend weight to the verdict of forty eight miles. Since a weak Hadith can be used for this purpose, the weakness in the hadith will not affect the deduction (of 48 miles). Imaamul Ulema Hadhrat Moulana Rasheed Ahmed Gangohi (A.R) had indicated towards this (view) in a reply to a question. The exact words are..." (Auzaane Shariat Pgs. 26-27)

Mufti Shafee (A.R) then quotes the words of Hadhrat Gangohi (A.R), which have already been mentioned above from Fataawaa Rasheediyya, in which Hadhrat Gangohi (A.R) proclaims the distance to be four 'bareed'. It has already been mentioned that one 'bareed' is equivalent to twelve Shari miles. Therefore, four 'bareed' will be equivalent to forty eight Shari miles (approximately 90km).

The Fataawa (verdicts) of Hadhrat Ibn Abbaas (R.A) and Hadhrat Ibn Umar (R.A)

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas (R.A) and Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar (R.A) have also stated that the Masaafate Qasr is forty eight Shari miles. Imaam Maalik (A.R) has deliberated in some detail on this view of Hadhrat Ibn Umar (R.A) and Hadhrat Ibn Abbas (R.A). Imaam Bukhari has mentioned this Fatwa briefly. It is therefore evident that Imaam Bukhari (A.R) also held this view.

Important Note

It is worth noting that there exists many different opinions amongst the Ulema of India with regard to the Masaafate Qasr, even amongst the Ulema of Deoband themselves. Hadhrat Moulana Qasim Nanotwi (A.R) is of the opinion that the distance is twenty four English miles. The prominent disciple of Hadhrat Gangohi (A.R) Hadhrat Moulana Khalil Ahmed Saharanpuri (A.R) stated that the distance is thirty six English miles, which was also the view of the Grand Mufti of India Hadhrat Mufti Kifaayatullah (A.R) as well as that of Moulana Abdush Shakoor Laknawi (A.R) and Hadhrat Moulana Abdulhay Farangi Mahalli (A.R). Other Ulema like Mufti Azizur Rahmaan Deobandi (A.R) and Hadhrat Hakimul Ummat Hadhrat Thanwi (A.R) favoured the verdict of forty eight English miles.
All these personalities are our senoirs. We truly respect them and have the highest regard for them. **However, the opinion held by the Ulema mentioned first is in accordance to the Hadith of Rasulullaah (salallaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam), the Sahaba (radhiyAllaahu-anhum) and the A'immah Mujtahideen (alayhimur-rahmah).** In conforming to this view there is no need to estimate or take into account the habits and practices of people. This opinion states that the "Masaafate Qasr" is 48 Shari miles, which is equivalent to approximately 90 km.

The views of the other Ulema are based on the practices and conditions of the people during particular times. These distances were calculated by estimating how much a person in their times could walk in a period of three days and three nights. Without doubt, their verdicts were entirely correct during their eras, just as the verdicts of the scholars before them were correct. However, when norms and habits change, even their principles dictate that it is neither correct to practice nor pass a fatwa (verdict) on what was prevalent during their times.

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